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21st Century Internships

How to get a job before graduation

David Shindler; Mark Babbitt

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David Shindler and Mark Babbitt

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How to get a job *before* graduation

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21st Century Internships: How to get a job *before* graduation
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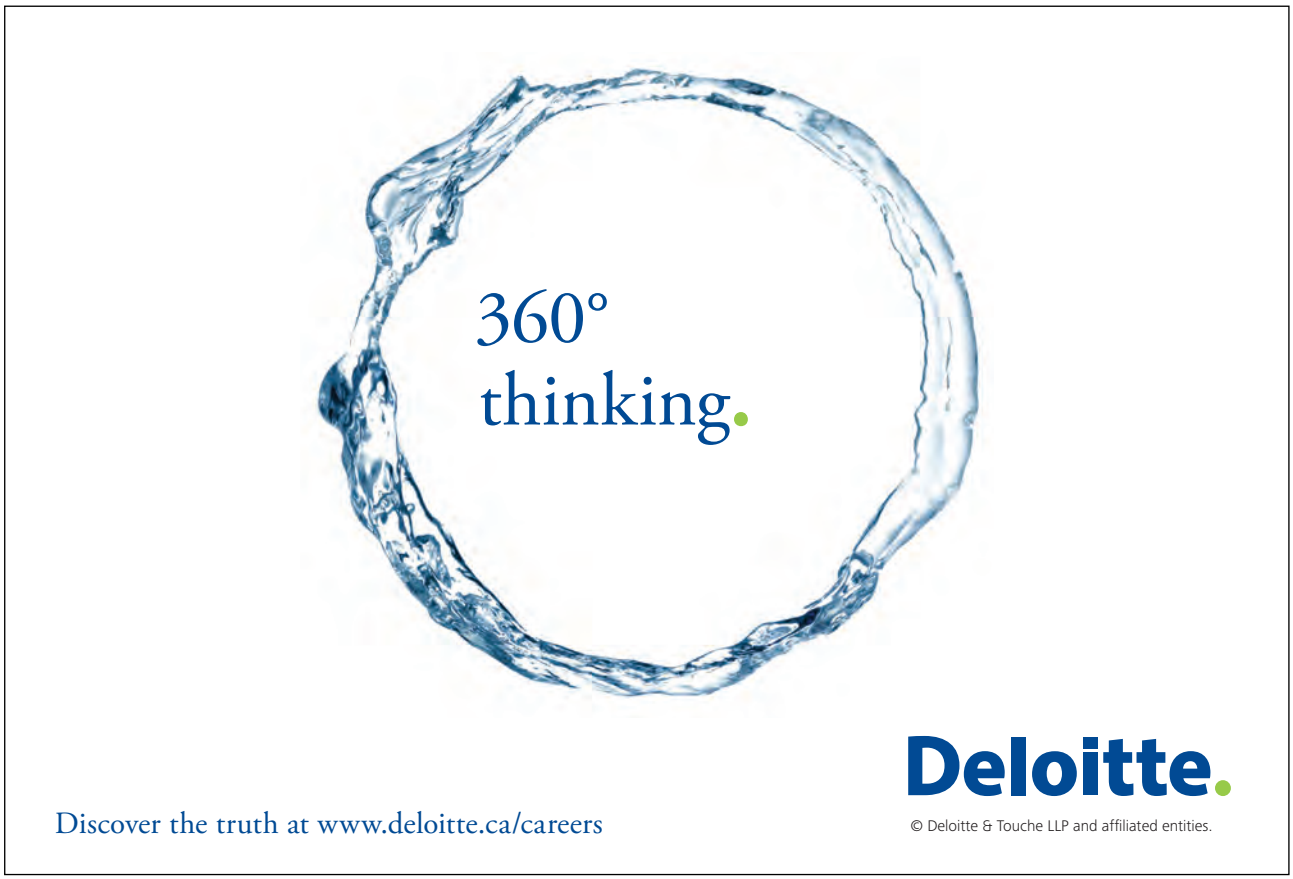

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- Ritika Trikha
- CareerBliss

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About the authors

David Shindler

David Shindler supports students, graduates, leaders and managers in education and business as they learn to leap. He brings his experience of working with organizations into the classroom and online to help bridge the gap between young people and employers.

He is an experienced independent workplace coach, people and organizational development consultant, group facilitator, blogger and author of *Learning to Leap, a guide to being more employable.*

Well known in print and online, David has contributed to the BBC on leadership, Forbes magazine on career issues and the Guardian newspaper's online careers panel for Q&As. He is a regular guest blogger for YouTern.com and UndergradSuccess.com, and has been listed by YouTern and CareerSherpa in the top 100 Twitter accounts job seekers are advised to follow for 2013.

He is the founder of The Employability Hub, a social learning community and resource center for students and recent graduates, supported by a handpicked group of experts and specialists in the core areas that all employers want. He is an active volunteer with Youth Employment UK, a campaign to tackle the youth unemployment challenge and to encourage more youth-friendly employers (including the promotion of ethical internships).

David is married with three daughters and lives in Yorkshire, England, where he enjoys playing golf and hiking in the Dales.

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Mark Babbitt

Mark Babbitt is the CEO and Founder of YouTern, an online community that enables young talent to become highly employable by connecting them to high-impact internships, mentors and contemporary career advice.

Already making a major impact in the career space, Mashable calls YouTern a "Top 5 Online Community for Starting Your Career" while Forbes has named the Nevada start-up a "Top Website for Your Career".

A serial mentor, Mark has been quoted in Inc., The Wall Street Journal, and ReadWriteWeb regarding career development, internships and higher education's role in preparing emerging talent for the workforce. A keynote speaker and blogger, Mark's contributions include The Huffington Post, 12Most.com, Switch and Shift and Intern Advocate.

Mark has been honored to be on GenJuice's list of "Top 100 Most Desirable Mentors", HR Examiner's "Top 25 Trendspotters in HR" and CareerBliss.com's list of "Top 10 Gen Y Experts". He and YouTern's blog, The Savvy Intern, have been named to several top blogger lists, including JobMob's "Top Career Bloggers of 2012".

Mark is the father of five children, a grandfather of two and spends his spare time fishing his favorite trout stream by his home near Lake Tahoe.

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Introduction

Our 21st century economy presents considerable challenges to many. Hardest hit: the recent graduate struggling to find work among a sea of applicants; some with far more experience and industry knowledge.

In *21st Century Internships – How to get a job before graduation*, authors David Shindler and Mark Babbitt take a no-nonsense look at the importance of internships to your early career; the development of soft skills that go well beyond what might have been learned in the classroom; and the impact of hands-on experience on your ability to become highly employable.

The authors share their combined knowledge of internships, career development and your ability to get job offers from great companies – by taking a detailed look at these points vital to your career:

- Why multiple internships during the college years are now imperative to young professionals
- The skills and traits in demand now – and how those skills are gained – and greatly improved through internships
- Where to find high-impact, mentor-based internships (versus the out-dated exploitive model still being offered far too often today)
- The role of networking and social media in securing, and making the best of, your internship
- Seeking out mentors during your internship – and building lifelong, mutually-beneficial professional relationships
- How to ensure that an internship opportunity is the right culture fit for you (and the company)
- Focus on the end-game, by keeping a record of achievement and quantifiable contributions during your internships
- Using internships as a career compass; steering your professional life in the right direction based on your passions, goals and knowing what you want to do (and, perhaps after an internship or two, what you know you do *not* want to do)
- How to turn an internship into a full-time job offer

The advice provided, from the perspective of two experts widely recognized for their mentorship and impactful career advice, makes *21st Century Internships – How to get a job before graduation* a must-have book for higher education students, recent graduates, young professionals – and those career professionals and mentors who guide them.

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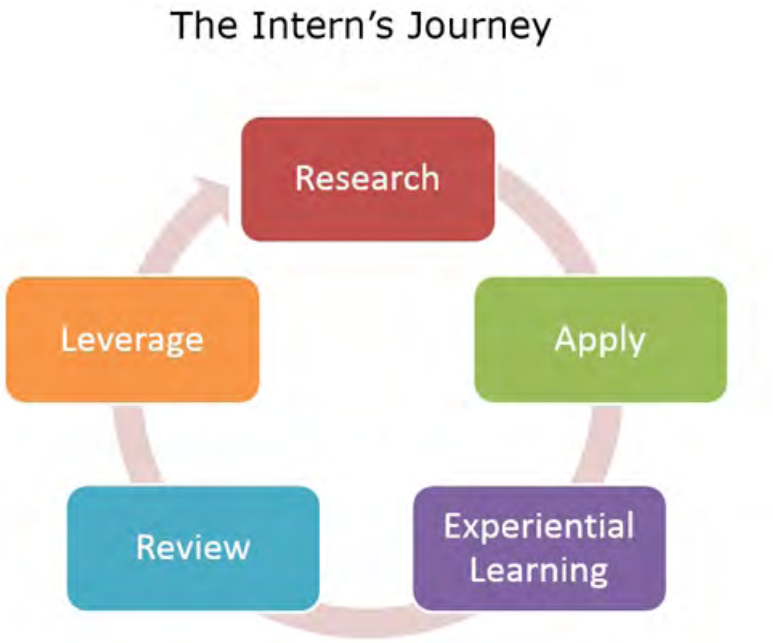
1 What is an internship?

The internship model has existed since about 1750 BC in Babylon. Back then, an intern was taught a trade or craft, perhaps as a brick layer, basket master or silversmith. Perhaps fortunately for today's aspiring young professional, much has changed since.

One critical point, however, remains the same: **an internship is hands-on, experiential training** that enables the intern to apply learned theory to the real world.



Today, internships are typically for current students of higher education; often for school credit. In addition, recent graduates and young professionals with the desire to gain experience also seek internships. In our new economy, high school students seeking to gain a career edge, or career direction, are also pursuing internships.

Preferable to most, an internship falls within your career of choice – typically in white collar or professional occupations. The best kind of internships, in addition to improving your technical skills, also help you improve your soft skills, expand your personal networks and enable you to begin building a credible personal brand.

Some institutions of higher education require internships – also known as "cooperative education" (also referred to as "co-ops") or "experiential education" – to graduate; most notably Cornell, George Washington, MIT, Northeastern and Rochester Institute of Technology.

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Typically, internships are hosted by a company, government office, non-profit or start-up. Those organizations (along with the intern, in best-case scenarios) determine learning objectives, milestones, soft skills to be developed or improved, networking opportunities and the intern's level of contribution.

> Internships are unique opportunities to learn, grow and develop in-demand professional skills.

Internships typically run the length of a semester or a season. However, shorter project-based internships are becoming common, as are traditional and virtual internships that may extend past the typical 10 to 13 weeks. Internships differ from job shadowing and externships (longer-term "job shadows", if you will) in that they typically require a longer, and more formal, commitment with a focus of training versus observing.

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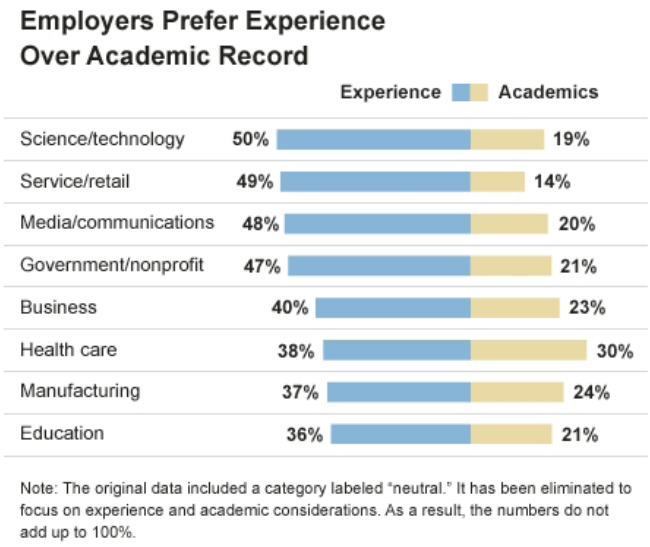
2 Why are internships important?

In our current economy, the "entry-level" professional has been significantly – perhaps negatively – impacted; organizations are running leaner – and must "do more with less".

As a result, many believe the days of securing a job based on having a college degree alone, without practical experience, are gone. Some would say there is no such thing as an entry-level position anymore; employers are demanding – and hiring – young talent ready to go to work, right now.

This is where internships play a major role in the education process, careers and the workplace.

According to a survey by the Chronicle of Higher Education and American Public Media's Marketplace, employers strongly prefer relevant experience over academic achievement:


Employers Prefer Experience Over Academic Record
Experience
Academics
Science/technology 50% 19%
Service/retail 49% 14%
Media/communications 48% 20%
Government/nonprofit 47% 21%
Business 40% 23%
Health care 38% 30%
Manufacturing 37% 24%
Education 36% 21%
Note: The original data included a category labeled "neutral." It has been eliminated to focus on experience and academic considerations. As a result, the numbers do not add up to 100%.

"Students' grades and their colleges' reputations are hardly the most important factors. Employers want new graduates to have real world experience. Internships and work during college matter most: Employers said that each of those was about four times as important as college reputation, which they rated least important. Relevance of coursework and GPA [degree class] rounded out the bottom of the list."

According to US-based National Association of Colleges and Employers, **9 out of 10 direct-from-college job offers go to those with internship experience** on their resume; often times, those who receive the job offer have multiple internships under their belt.

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Other than greatly increasing your employability, there are many reasons why an internship is vital to your career development:

- Practical experience
- Confidence and professional poise
- Professional networking opportunities
- Validation of major, degree and career choice
- Development of an employable personal brand
- First-hand knowledge of the industry and/or company
- A sense of contribution in a non-academic environment
- Development of high-impact mentor relationships (see chapter 8)

Employers also benefit from hiring and mentoring young talent through internships:

- Expansion of bandwidth and manpower
- Productive ties to local higher education
- Delegation of non-core tasks and responsibilities
- The opportunity to attract Millennial/Gen Y talent
- Taking on enthusiastic talent to solve business challenges
- A "pay-it-forward" approach to grooming young professionals
- A cost-effective, low risk way of "trying out" potential team members

Done right, with both the professional development of the intern and the company mission in mind, internships are often the proverbial "win-win".

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3 Timing of an internship

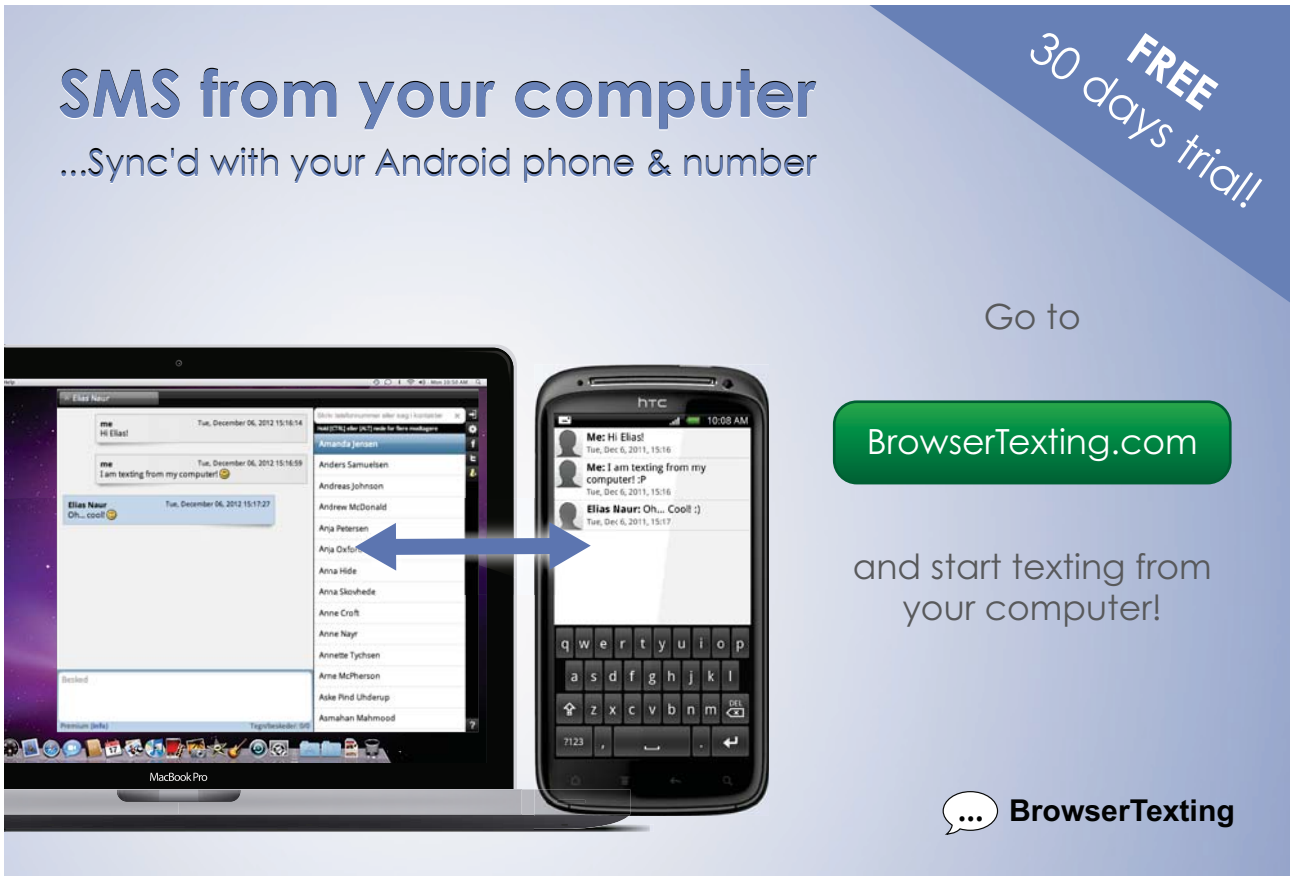
3.1 How many internships should I complete?

When many of us think of internships, we think of the single 40-hour-per-week, 10-week summer program performed between our junior and senior years. While these traditional summer internships remain prevalent, there are now many other forms of internships that contribute greatly to your employability.

- During semester | 10 to 20 hour-per-week internships performed while attending class
- Virtual | Year-round internships performed remotely via internet, Skype, email, etc.
- Project-based | Internships focused on completing a single specific task or business function

Regardless of the type of internship you pursue, the new standard for internships is to complete one high-impact internship for every year you're in college…

An undergraduate degree = 4 completed internships
A post-graduate degree = a total of 6 completed internships



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While this "new normal" is a dramatic change from just a few years ago (and, frankly, a lot of work) consider this: organizations like Google, AOL, TripAdvisor – and many highly coveted internship hosts – prefer you already have 3 to 5 internships under your belt to *even be considered* for their internships.

Yes, the internship world is now that competitive.

While you should complete at least one internship per year, you simply cannot over-commit. Otherwise, your classes, personal life and even your health may be affected.

The key to success: balancing academic, extra-curricular and social calendars with proactive career development.

Good general rules:

- When taking classes full-time: take on no more than one 10 to 15 hour-per-week internship; very important: make sure the employer understands you are fully committed to your academics and they are willing to work around – and properly communicated – schedule
- Winter break: Take on a project-based internship of no more than 4 to 6 weeks; to allow time to spend with your family, consider a virtual internship
- Summer break: Take on the larger, perhaps full-time, 10 to 13 week commitment…and go "all in"

3.2 When should I apply?

Some young careerists begin school with very little idea of what career path to take when they graduate. That's natural; college is a time for growth and exploration. And that includes *career* exploration!

Explore your career possibilities through internships as soon as possible – **starting your freshman year.**

The earlier you start, the more time you have to gain experience. Just as important, you'll have a clear idea whether your degree – and chosen profession – is right for you. Wouldn't you rather know that now…instead of just before your senior year…when you can still change your major/degree and dodge the "my job sucks" bullet?

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Because many internships follow academic calendars, when you should apply also depends greatly on the size and type of the company:

- More traditional, larger employers hire their summer internships as early as January; fall interns are selected in early summer, etc.
- Smaller, more contemporary companies hire just before the new "internship season" begins; for example, a summer intern isn't hired until late April or into May
- Many other organizations, including start-ups and non-profits hire interns year-round; for them, there is no internship season

Here's what may be most important, however…

When you find an open internship position that intrigues you, research the company, tailor your resume/CV to the position, write a high-quality cover letter and apply. Don't over-prioritize the "season". Don't think about "Will they think I'm too young?"

When you present yourself as a confident and competent candidate, and you have the skill set that matches the recruiter's needs, you've given yourself the best chance to get an interview. Neither your timing – nor your age – will matter.

One more thought on when to apply…

Young professionals who brand themselves as highly employable before graduation recognize their current position is only one step on their career path. They plan now, for the next internship or job.

During your current internship, make sure you're networking – making contacts and building relationships that will help you gain your next position.

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Yes, even when you already have an internship … you should be looking for your next!

Another good way to plan ahead is to periodically (but regularly) review online internship and job postings in your industry. Do so not necessarily with the intent to apply, but to become familiar with the latest skills employers in your field are hiring for, and what responsibilities you might face in those positions.

This "eye on your future" will help guide your career development, and give you an edge over much of your competition.

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4 What do employers really want?

Many employers regard internships as an extended interview; a way of seeing the capability and potential of a person – you – over an extended period of time. At the same time, they expect the intern to contribute and add value to their company. Just like they do when hiring a permanent employee, employers are looking for what makes you "employable".

In very simple terms, being employable means you are a good fit within the specific role, culture and business of an employer – whether you are applying for a job or are already an intern within an organization. It's more than just what you know and can do; your attitude and approach to continuous learning, the activities you engage in outside your degree and how well-rounded you are as a person all provide a picture of what you are likely to bring to an employer.

For students or for those freshly graduated, employers want to know how 'market-ready' you are – right now. They do not expect you to be the finished article, however; often, they are far more interested in your attitude than your skills. After all, the latter can be further developed once you join.

> "***Mindset will often trump technical skills***"
> John Reed, Chairman of the London recruitment firm, Reed

When examining whether you're a good fit for their organization, employers look at critical attributes such as:

Professionalism

Do you understand the level of professionalism we expect in our company? Can you demonstrate that you have the character and work ethic we expect? Who are you as a person? Does your unique value proposition demonstrate that you can do this job and that you are the right one for us?

> Consistently exhibiting the right mindset can turn an internship into **a genuine opportunity for employment.**

Skill set

Do you know, and can you demonstrate, the professional, soft and technical skills required to succeed here? Are you a problem-solver, a communicator and a strategic thinker? Are you able to self-learn critical skills? Are you coachable?

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Knowledge

Do you *get* our business model and the world we inhabit? Can you put yourself in our customers' shoes? How will what you know and have experienced to date help you to be successful in this role? Most important, are you passionate about the mission of our organization…and can you help us move that mission forward?

At the very least, a job well done can establish you as a mentee worth mentoring – and set you up for a sterling recommendation that will help you get your next internship, or a job.

But what is the right mindset? What are employers looking for – from you?

Positive attitude

Enthusiasm and a "can do" attitude come from your personality, *choosing* your attitude and enjoying your job. Take initiative, empathize and see how to make the task at hand – and the company – better.

Self-management

Employers want active team members willing to take responsibility; they choose to hire self-starters who are assertive, resilient, balanced, reliable and able to juggle tasks without panic. They expect you to be committed to – and accountable for – your own development.

Teamwork

You must know what good teamwork looks like – and, based on your strengths, how you can best contribute. Cooperating, leading *and* following are all critical, and in-demand, skills.

Communication

You must be able to listen well – and to confidently ask good questions; the kind that elicit thoughtful response. You should be able to build rapport and trust. Perhaps most important, you must be able to verbally articulate your views in a coherent manner and produce structured written work.

According to many surveys where employers were asked what they desire most from graduates **…verbal and written communication were listed as the most in-demand skills.**

Technological savvy

It will be expected that you will have a thorough understanding of information, social and digital communication tools. From MS Office Suite to mobile apps, search engines and the Internet…you must be savvy. From the employer's perspective: embrace the digital revolution or be considered obsolete.

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Analytical thinking

Analyzing facts and situations; creative thinking and working to understand problems and develop solutions in a collaborative manner is critical; creative problem solving – applying your imagination (we all have one!) – is a top demand of most employers.

Skill with numbers

Applying basic numerical concepts to everyday life takes you a long way. Quick mental calculations like estimating and working out a percentage instantly are more-than-impressive skills.

Business and customer awareness

A fundamental component of employability is how well you manage relationships with customers, users, partners and vendors. To impress, align your mindset with the behavior you want to present to a customer, every time, and look wider than your role.

Collaboration

Collaborators build relationships through trust and are comfortable with interdependence, crossing boundaries, self-disclosure and feedback. They value others' opinions and have a win-win mentality, networking skills and mindset. Collaborators are employable.

In our new economy … collaboration is king!

Global and cultural awareness

Our global economy makes cross-cultural awareness a sought after attribute. Being able to work effectively in different linguistic or cultural settings – and in groups of different generations and team members of varied skills, working styles and values – is more than marketable.

Of course, not all of us are good at every skill set listed above. The secret is to "sell" what you're good at now – and articulate a willingness to learn those skills not yet mastered. Most important, you must convincingly show how your skill set will solve the employer's problems — those that must be solved now and also over the long-term.

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Next time you interview for an internship, or a job at the end of your internship, and the interviewer says, "Tell me about you…?" – instead of telling them where you live, went to school or about your family, start with this list of skills and mindsets.

In other words, show the employer what they really want to see!

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5 How to find your internship

5.1 Choosing the right internship for you

There are many factors involved with choosing the right internship for you including your degree, chosen career path, the availability of mentors and so much more.

Here are some ideas on what to include on your internship wish list:

Your host company

Do you want to work for a big company or perhaps a small company or start-up? Do you care if you are an anonymous "Intern X" – or would you prefer to develop relationships with every person in your office? Figure out what your internship host company should be like, in a fair amount of detail, and put your wishes on the list.

Paid vs. unpaid?

Are you willing to accept – and can you afford – an unpaid internship? Is course credit enough for you? If yes, what funds will pay for those credits? Do you need to earn money to pay living expenses or transportation costs?

These are tough questions, but in this economy they are some of the most important…for everyone.

In the UK, you are entitled by law to be paid for your internship if you have a contract of employment. Without one, students take a risk with their legal rights to fair treatment. Employers take the risk they won't be sued either by a student (for pay), a customer (for something done by the student in the name of the employer) or prosecuted by the tax man (for breaking the law).

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In the US, there are no national "laws" regarding unpaid internships. However, organizations are supposed to follow the guidelines established in what has become known as the "6 Prong Test" from the Department of Labor's (DOL) Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA):

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

The reality is, however:

- There are no direct consequences for employers who fail to comply with this "Test" (again, these are guidelines, not law)
- The DOL has no enforcement capabilities; the only cases that come to their attention are driven by complaints by interns (or the attorneys that represent them)
- Few interns complain for fear they may risk their reputation and/or careers

So, what is an intern to do?

Make the right choice for you. While we at YouTern and The Employability Hub advocate paid internships, the fact is that many paid internships are terrible educational experiences; they lack mentorship, direction and career value. On the other hand, many former interns feel their unpaid internships were the difference maker to their careers…and wouldn't trade the experience for anything.

The real key, no matter where you live and work:
never let yourself be exploited as unpaid labor

Your time is valuable; so is a good employer's. As you look at every opportunity to intern, ensure the relationship is beneficial for all sides – and **expectations are properly set and maintained.**

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Career-focused or career diversity?

Do you want to work for a company 100% dedicated to your chosen career field? Or are you okay working for an industry-related department of a company? For example, if you are an engineer…do you want to work for an engineering company, or would you instead consider working for the Engineering Department of say, Disney? You might also consider an internship in a widely-used and wildly-popular industry like healthcare or social/digital media?

Perhaps most important: being open to working at different types of companies might provide more internship opportunities from which to choose.

Virtual vs. in-office

Do you want to commute to an office or work from home? In the digital age, some companies find team members work just as effectively from home, in the library or at Starbucks. Communication through conference calls or via email and Skype make being in the same physical location, unnecessary.

Especially if you are not from an urban area like New York, London or Silicon Valley where many internships are available
…being open to a virtual internship means more opportunity.

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Mentor or supervisor?

Do you want a mentor – someone who actively promotes your learning process (see chapter 8) during the internship? Or do you instead prefer a supervisor who lets you learn on your own…and also provides a little direction when it may be needed?

Some companies take pride in offering mentors for their interns. At many companies, a supervisor is also the mentor. He or she answers the intern's questions, gives them guidance and offers suggestions to help advance their learning – while also expecting the intern to self-learn through experience and even mistakes.

Think about what type of guidance you want, and need.

What culture is best for you?

Do you like structure, rules and rigidity typically associated with larger companies, well established non-profits and the government? Or do you prefer a more laid back, relaxed, go-with-the-flow environment often found in smaller businesses, start-ups and grass-roots non-profits?

Deciding which culture fits your personality best is important so you may thrive during your internship. Not sure what fits you best? Try one of each!

How far will you travel?

Are you okay with commuting? If yes, how far are you willing to travel…15 minutes each way…or maybe an hour or more every day?

A longer commute tolerance may open a wider range of opportunities. At the same time, sitting in traffic or on a train is a financial drain, as well as a quality of life consideration. Think honestly about how you feel about your potential commute – because what might sound tolerable during the interview can become a major stress point during the internship.

5.2 Finding the right internships: old-school

Many of the traditional means of finding internships still exist, even if they aren't as productive as they once were.

Career centers

Your on-campus career center should be one of your first stops on campus…as early as your first week, freshman year. Surveys consistently indicate that not nearly enough students visit their career center…or know how they can help.

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Yes, some career centers have reputations for not assisting students as much as they could, or for lacking actionable, contemporary career advice. However, no matter how old-school your career center may be, it likely offers many positive assets – including amazing contacts with local employers.

Thankfully, not all career centers fall into the old-school category; in fact, many are now staffed with highly capable, knowledgeable, passionate professionals ready to help you with your internship search. They will help you learn how best to network, to leverage social media, build effective career collateral and hone your interview skills.

Bottom line: network with the professionals in your career center!
Walk in with an open-mind and a positive attitude.

Job boards

Large job boards like Monster, Craigslist and Internships.com used to be the best way to find an internship, or job. Today, their impact has greatly diminished as more and more positions are filled via networking, social media and referrals. Also working against the big job boards: the frustrating candidate experience.

Many internship seekers tell stories of following the process exactly as expected – sometimes applying to hundreds of positions – and never getting a call back. Additionally, there are many stories of less-than-reputable employers and postings on the big boards; some observers estimate as many as 30% of all big job board postings do not represent legitimate internship opportunities. Surely, this is not where all your time should be spent…and your expectations should be set according to results seen by your peers.

We should also add that there are exceptions to the "job boards don't work" rule. Most notably are IdeaList.org and YouTern, which has a small job board where every post is vetted for legitimacy and the availability of a mentor.

Employer web sites

Postings on employer web sites are still a terrific resource for research, networking and availability of open internships.

Just remember: resist temptation to blindly look for open internships on companies' career pages. Instead, first build a personal employer target list – a thoroughly researched list of 10 companies you would really like to work for – and maintain your focus on that list. Do your homework first!

The real secret to success found by using these old-school internship search tools:
Use them as just one of many tools in your toolbox…don't count on them exclusively to help you find your internship opportunity.

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5.3 Internship Service Bureaus

Niche internship placement organizations, some independent and others sponsored by employers, are springing to meet the demand of both students/graduates and employers.

These agencies match you with an employer and internship opportunity, some also providing resume/CV advice (including video profiles). Examples include London-based Inspiring Interns, who have a hit rate of 65% of their interns securing a job as a result of their internship.

If you want to find out about positive or negative experiences from interns, check out internship rating sites such as Glassdoor.com, InternshipRatings.com and RatemyPlacement.co.uk, which act like TripAdvisor for internships, enabling you to see what the experience may really be like.

5.4 Leveraging Social Media

Right now, you may view social media only as a social tool with which to connect with friends and relatives. In reality, social media can be a huge asset in your internship search by enabling you to expand your network and share your voice as you pursue that first job after graduation.

As our friend Lea McLeod of Degrees of Transitions, a career expert who specializes in assisting near- or recent-graduates transition into the workforce, points out so well:

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The value of social media as you start your career search is three-fold:

- You can immediately connect with professionals, organizations, mentors and career experts
- A well-managed social media presence enables employers to easily find and identify you
- You are able to monitor your online presence and control, to the best of your ability, content related to your personal brand

The key to finding an internship via social media is that you must have a clear strategy and carefully manage the time you spend on the online platforms. Without a plan, social media can become a timesuck…and you won't have much to show for your investment.

What Lea provides below is not intended to be an exhaustive list of everything you can do in a social media search. However, the points represent some great ideas for beginner to intermediate levels of social media expertise. Of course, don't do them all at once. Begin with one platform, get comfortable with how you'll use that element to help you find an internship, and then move to the next.

Soon, you'll be a social media job search expert!

Facebook

We're going to start with what you probably know best: Facebook. Statistically, it's likely you have a decent sized network on Facebook. Why not leverage the network you already have first?

Shout out to your friends and family

Let your existing friends know exactly what kind of internship you hope to find and what organizations you aspire to work for. Ask who they know that they could introduce you to. After all, these are folks who already know you, presumably have some level of trust in you and who could easily refer you.

Build your BranchOut profile

Download this Facebook app that allows you to build a "professional" presence and leverage your existing friends' network. Upload a work-appropriate head shot and build your profile. Because it's walled off from your personal profile, you can connect to others and network professionally. You can also browse internship postings, apply, and see how you're connected to those posting the internships.

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Follow companies, industry influencers and career experts

Follow your target companies on fan pages, or subscribe to feeds from career search or industry experts. This is a great way to keep up with employer branding, product trends, communication styles and much more.

Manage your privacy settings

As we all know by now, employers are checking you out online, before they even contact you. Be smart about what's available to the public, and what only your friends can see. Make this *an immediate priority.*

LinkedIn

At first, LinkedIn – the world's most popular professional network – can be a bit intimidating. So start with the basics of LinkedIn and keep building on what you know already – and are doing to build your social media presence.

Build your profile

Include an attention-getting headline and summary statement. Use keywords that will attract the kind of employer, and internship, you are looking for. So the world can see your smiling face, include a professional, close-in head shot.

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Create your vanity URL

LinkedIn will allow you to define a URL unique to you which you can then include on your resume and other career-related materials. That way, when people look you up on LinkedIn, they'll be sure to find *your* profile, and not someone else with the same or similar name.

Connect to everyone you know

Include your parents, parents of your friends, your friends, professors and basically anyone in your life who has a profile. Then build from there.

> With each invitation to connect, include a brief, personalized note introducing yourself; **do not just send the generic connection invitation text LinkedIn provides**

Follow your target companies

Use the 'Companies' feature in the LinkedIn search tab to follow organizations you believe are a good match for you. See what jobs are posted and who you're connected to in those organizations so you can then pursue introductions.

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Investigate job postings and apply for jobs

On LinkedIn, you can see the skills and competencies employers seek…right in their job postings. This process also gets you familiar with the language they use (including keywords), enabling you to use this language as you prepare your personal marketing materials. Bonus: you can apply for jobs right from the site.

Identify new potential connections

Simply put, your connections can introduce you to their connections. Be sure you have a good introduction message and professional statement about why you would like to connect – and why they should help you.

Join groups; participate in conversations

LinkedIn Groups are an opportunity for you to make intelligent comments and observations, answer questions and make connections with influencers. Join groups where you have interests or connections, including alumni, career interests, Gen Y or millennial groups, job search, internships, associations or industry specific groups.

Twitter

Twitter is a way to have conversations with virtually anyone in the Twitterverse. And there's no gatekeeper in sight. If you find someone who is intriguing or has a shared interest, you can speak directly to them, one on one, and they will most likely respond to you.

To get started:

> As Lea McLeod says, "Twitter is about more than keeping up with the Kardashians, or Macklemore."

Build your profile

Building a profile on Twitter is much easier than LinkedIn, mostly because you are limited to 160 characters for your entire bio. Include your interests, your goals, and your LinkedIn URL. Hint: look at the profiles of successful recent grads and your peers, even your competitors, to get some emulation ideas.

Develop a strategy

Begin with the end in mind. Who do you want to connect with, and why? Perhaps you want to converse with people in your field and organizations of interest to you? What are the 10 target organizations you have or the top three industries you want to explore? Be strategic; network with purpose.

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Follow your strategy

Once you've identified the target companies and industries, follow the folks who represent and champion them. Re-tweet pertinent posts. Engage in conversation, make comments and ask good questions. Build a reputation…and get known!

Build lists

So you can easily organize and follow key influencers and contacts, use Twitter's "List" feature. In one list you can have career search contacts; in other lists you can have your top 10 target companies and perhaps tweets from notables in your desired industry. These lists make it very easy to scan recent posts from your community, re-tweet them, and add your own perspective. Using lists will also save you valuable time – and keep you focused.

Bonus tip: join Twitter chats

NEARLY ALL RECRUITERS ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO FIND CANDIDATES:
LINKEDIN 98%
94.5 % of recruiters have successfully hired candidates through LinkedIn.
TWITTER 42%
FACEBOOK 33%

Twitter chats are online chats, usually at the same day and time each week. The chats are moderated by hosts who ask questions and facilitate the conversation. Twitter chats are a fun and fast-paced way to participate in a virtual conversation. You'll meet new people and make more connections. Chats we suggest: #InternPro and #jobhuntchat on Mondays and #OMCChat (Open Mic Career Chat) on Thursdays.

Don't let social media overwhelm you…and don't allow it to be a timesuck. Find the best tools for you; stay focused and put them to work in your internship search.

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5.5 Network, network, network!

Many of us, even after setting up our social media profiles, do not consider networking a key element in an internship search strategy. However, the contacts in your network are much more likely to get you hired…

Get hired faster

Getting an interview is sometimes the hardest part about securing an internship. Knowing a current employee at that company, however, will – 9 times out of 10 in our new economy – dramatically increase your chance of getting an interview.

> Research from Jobvite found that "Employees hired through referral are **hired 55% faster than those who come from a career site."**

Become an enthusiastic referral

John Muscarello, a blogger and networking evangelist, says: "I realized networking was going to play a big role in my job search after my mentor, Deirdre Breakenridge, shared that 85% of open positions are not posted online. Every single job I have found has been through a person who recommended me or told me about an opportunity." Muscarello adds: "When my current employer is looking for a new employee, they always send around an email to the entire company asking for referrals."

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This theory is supported by the current recruiting practices of many organizations:

- Big companies like Ernst & Young are increasingly **using their own workers to find new hires, saving time and money.** "…a referral puts them in the express lane," said Larry Nash, Director of Experience and Executive Recruiting. "Indeed, as **referred candidates get fast-tracked**, applicants from other sources like corporate web sites, internet job boards and job fairs sink to the bottom of the pile."
- "You're submitting your résumé to a black hole [online]," said John Sullivan, a human resources consultant. "You're not going to find top performers at a job fair. Whether it's fair or not, **you need to have employees make referrals for you if you want to find a job**".

To become an employee referral, you must network!

Know people who know who's hiring

Professionals who attend in-person networking events consistently have a good handle on what is happening; they know which companies are doing well, important events happening in the industry, and which companies are hiring. These influencers are nearly always willing to help new professionals in the industry; offer to take them out to coffee so that you can ask them more about the industry and what they currently do.

By networking efficiently you will find a job faster than your competition. You'll also build a substantial personal sphere of influence that will benefit you throughout your career!

5.6 Create your own internship

Once you have your social media profiles built and have become comfortable with networking…go to the next level: creating your own internship. Here's how:

1. Create a target list of 10 companies you would really like to work for today
2. Imagine an internship tailored to your strengths – what would that internship look like, and how would it benefit the employer? What problem will you solve as their intern?
3. Prepare a pitch specific to the employer on your target list best suited to you
4. Find a recruiter or hiring manager at one of your target companies and introduce yourself through LinkedIn, Twitter or by asking for an informational interview
5. Arrange a coffee meeting – just 15 minutes of their time
6. Sell your plan…and convince them they need you, your passion and your plan

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Used correctly, this tactic works amazingly well – especially in this economy. Rarely will an employer turn down an offer of help…and even if they do, you've just impressed a potential mentor and influential contact.

Don't wait for the perfect internship for you. Work with your career center. Peruse the job boards for leads and valuable keywords. Perhaps most important in today's economy, build your social media presence and personal network. Then – using skills gained – create your own internship!

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6 How do I know a good internship from bad?

Just like there are bad and good college courses, bad relationships and good…and both good and bad jobs
…there are good and bad internships.

6.1 Warning signs of a bad internship

So how do you know what is a good internship? Or if an internship opportunity (and an exploitive employer) is something you should walk away from at a quick pace?

It is easy to say how important it is to do your research before applying and accepting an internship. It is another consideration all together, however, to identify which employers take a professional and responsible approach to hiring interns – and which do not.

Here are the "red flag" signs to watch out for, common among bad employers and bad internships:

Too good to be true

Unfortunately, there are many scams disguised as internships. The general rule of thumb, like many other aspects of your life: "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is." Specifically, be aware of any organization that asks for your social security number before they've formally offered you a position, anyone who asks for passwords to your social media accounts and any request to invest your money in their organization.

Any hint of exploitation

Internships where you are disrespected, placed in unsafe conditions (physically or emotionally) or asked to compromise your ethics are the biggest red flags. However, exploitation can take many other forms, including an employer hiring you simply as "free labor". Run away.

Improperly set expectations

From big picture and critical items such as responsibilities, assignments and milestones, all the way down to use of the cell phone, Facebook (in a non-social media role, of course) and dress code – your expectations must be properly set, from day one of the internship.

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Failure to teach

By definition, an internship is experiential education – an extension of what you learn in the classroom, with a real world spin. Far too many internships, even those where no other major negative issues exist, get rated much lower than expected because the intern says: "I had a great time, but I didn't learn anything."

Not facilitating a "mentor" relationship

Today's interns aren't looking for a go-fer job with someone barking orders and assigning menial tasks. You should crave a mentor from whom you can learn, and who, in return, takes an active interest in your professional growth – during, and perhaps also after, the internship.

Breakdown in communication and feedback

Like all team members, you can't correct what you don't know is wrong. Communication, both spontaneous and formal (on-board, mid-term and exit interviews, at a minimum), is critical to your internship experience – and by default places you in a "learning" environment that will greatly improve both your technical and soft skills.

Inability to confirm or deny a career choice

You may view your internship as a chance to try a career choice on for size – an opportunity to confirm, or deny, an interest in your chosen vocation. If at the end of the internship you have gained no significant insight, the internship will not be as productive as you'd hoped.

Lack of accountability and recognition

If your mentor shows no interest in holding you accountable for timely completion of tasks, and for co-managing your own internship, they are overlooking a fundamental (yet monumental in terms of learning) piece of a quality internship. Failing to recognize your hard work and contribution – especially when you have clearly exceeded expectations – is equally damning. The biggest red flag in this category: upfront refusal to supply a letter of recognition or referral at the end of the internship.

Failure to prepare (and being assigned busy work)

Instead of planning out your on-boarding and work a day or week ahead of time, and delegating tasks important to both the company and you, a supervisor will often assign "busy work" to get you "out of my hair" for a while. We guarantee this practice does not mean good things for you as intern.

Missed opportunity to network

As you view networking occurring among your mentors and colleagues – social media, lunches, networking meetings and Twitter chats – think: "Am I being included?" If not, it may be that your internship is not running at full steam.

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Unwillingness to listen

Internships in today's market are proverbial "win-win" relationships – both the company and you benefit from the experience. If your goals and career aspirations are not integrated into the learning plan from the very beginning of the internship – the internship could be considered a failure.

Failure to compensate (and not just wages)

The authors strongly support paid internships. We also understand compensation comes in many forms other than an hourly wage. Stipends, performance-based bonuses, formal mentoring by an influencer, tangible elements for a portfolio, meaningful exposure to a C-level or board-level executive's personal network, paid transportation and parking expenses, and lunches – all can be considered effective, and agreeable, forms of compensation. How will you be compensated? And what is acceptable to you?

6.2 What to expect from a high-quality employer

Experiencing a well-run and credible internship with a well-regarded employer will add value to your resume/CV. Here is what you really ought to expect from a responsible employer before, during and after an internship:

The Wake
the only emission we want to leave behind
Low-speed Engines Medium-speed Engines Turbochargers Propellers Propulsion Packages PrimeServ
The design of eco-friendly marine power and propulsion solutions is crucial for MAN Diesel & Turbo.
Power competencies are offered with the world's largest engine programme – having outputs spanning from 450 to 87,220 kW per engine. Get up front!
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Before:

A good employer will take their responsibilities seriously. They understand they have a fantastic opportunity to shape and nurture the talent of an enthusiastic, unique talent who is aching to learn from them. In return they reap the rewards of all that potential for the good of their business and their customers.

A good employer will develop, train, induct and brief your mentor so they are fully prepared for the job of nurturing you. They will pick the right person to be the mentor.

During:

An effective employer will stretch you so you get maximum experiential learning with a real world spin. They will support, coach and mentor you, they will find you opportunities. They hold regular reviews. They hold your mentor accountable. They champion and celebrate your successes.

Worth repeating: From big picture and critical items such as responsibilities, assignments and milestones, all the way down to dress code and rules regarding personal use of the cell phone and Facebook – they will set expectations from day one of your internship.

The employer's mindset should be 'how can I leverage your unique capabilities?' not 'what can I find for you to do?'

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After:

An excellent employer will ask you to give the *employer* a testimonial, as well as write one for you!

They will conduct an exit interview. They ask you to write up your internship experience, both good and bad. They will ask their regular employees to give their feedback regarding your performance and share it with you.

Finally, an excellent employer will offer you a job if it's right for both parties. If not, they will signpost you towards what they're seeking or introduce you to their network. They help you learn to leap.

6.3 What to expect from yourself

You are equally responsible for a high-quality, high-impact internship experience. Here's what you should expect from yourself:

Before:

Here are eight items you need to cross off your "I'm prepared" list in the days and weeks prior to starting your internship:

Read the latest company news and reports

Understand the successes and challenges of the industry, the company, their customers and major partners. Read up on any new product launches and customer reviews. The more you know, the better you can help the mission.

Research the company and team

Head to LinkedIn. Then research key employees and understand the structure of the company; anticipate who might be on your team. Make note of leaders, influencers and potential mentors with whom you may want to connect during the internship.

Brush up on your networking skills

Even when most are welcoming at your internship, it can be intimidating to network and engage with a bunch of people you've never met. So come fully armed – and be ready to extend a firm handshake and ask good questions.

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Make a list of objectives

What do you want to accomplish in this internship? Who do you want to meet? What business units or projects most interest you? Having this list will be a map for your development during your internship. Many managers are more than willing to give you experiences and opportunities…if you just know what, and who, you want to ask.

Get a new alarm clock

There is no worse first impression to make than being late. Many companies constantly evaluate interns for job fit, culture fit, leadership, responsibility and so many other characteristics…and punctuality is at the top of that list. Put your best foot forward every day, by showing up early.

Research current job openings

Many companies have internships that don't align to an exact match in a full-time position. Assuming you want an offer at the end of the internship, take the time to look through their career site. If you find something interesting, find out more about that job, manager, and department. If it's a more senior position, make it your goal to find a manager to explain the career path into that type of job.

Brain power
By 2020, wind could provide one-tenth of our planet's electricity needs. Already today, SKF's innovative know-how is crucial to running a large proportion of the world's wind turbines.
Up to 25 % of the generating costs relate to maintenance. These can be reduced dramatically thanks to our systems for on-line condition monitoring and automatic lubrication. We help make it more economical to create cleaner, cheaper energy out of thin air.
By sharing our experience, expertise, and creativity, industries can boost performance beyond expectations.
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Know your strengths…and your weaknesses

It is extremely important to know your strengths and how you can leverage them; however, it is equally important to know your current limits. Everyone has them. Know what areas in which you need development and be open to help yourself grow.

Plan to have fun

Every good manager knows everyone needs some fun once in a while. If you're invited to lunch with a new acquaintance – go. If you're invited to play a quick round of football in the break room with your team member – do it. This doesn't show that you're lazy – it shows that you fully embrace the culture of the organization. Don't try to burn yourself out – don't always work through lunch just to prove you can.

During:

There are do's and there are don'ts that will help you keep your internship and get the most out of it for your personal development and career success. Here are helpful tips for getting the most out of your internship while at work:

DO	DON'T
Communicate You are going to be judged on your written and verbal communication skills. If you're ready for the big time, show off a bit. If your professional communication skills need a little work, find a mentor to assist your efforts to learn.	**Yak on the phone** It's okay to take a few personal calls during the workday (although it's important to abide by proper office phone etiquette). When your personal life starts to conflict with what you should be doing at work, however, you may be talking too much.
Google everything Anyone who tells you there is no such things as a stupid question has never heard of "Google". Rather than wasting a colleague's, mentor's or supervisor's valuable time, take a minute first to self-learn. If Google doesn't get it done, try LinkedIn groups, Quora, a help-desk or an industry forum to find your answers.	**Surf the internet** We're all guilty of checking our personal email from time to time – or taking a break to read a funny meme or article. However, spending excessive time surfing websites irrelevant to your job will likely get you into trouble. Try to save Facebook or online shopping for after work, and never visit adult sites during working hours.
Be a champion Intentionally, and sincerely, champion the work of co-workers, customers and vendors. Call it karma if you will, but this is a terrific way to create a solid reputation.	**Be a gossip** Gossip can hurt company morale, and you. Do everything possible to avoid spreading rumors or belittling others. Stay away from idle chatter that could potentially endanger your internship.
Be likeable Never underestimate the power of being humble, positive and empathetic. Your co-workers will appreciate the uplifting attitude; your mentors and bosses will notice your genuine enthusiasm and your smile.	**Be a drama queen** With every team trying to do more with less, there simply isn't time for timesucks like drama queens, victims, divas and trolls. If you feel like complaining, do it off-hours on Facebook, like everyone else (just don't complain about work!)

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DO	DON'T
Network The more you network, the more value you gain from the internship experience. Build relationships that not only benefit you and the company now…but also long after the internship is over.	**Date co-workers** Companies have different policies regarding dating co-workers, so make sure you know the company rules. You don't want to get involved in a fling that will cost you your date money.
General Rule Don't be afraid to make mistakes…just be ready to fail fast.	**General Rule** If you have to think twice about something…don't do it once

After:

Here are some helpful tips for ensuring you walk away from your internship having given yourself the best chance of nailing an excellent referral, or perhaps a job offer:

- When your internship is nearing its end, meet with your mentor or supervisor to discuss your achievements and progress
- Get feedback on what you did well and the areas you could develop further
- Record your successes , activities, skills used and knowledge gained, including testimonials
- Send an email or letter thanking your mentor, supervisor and colleagues for their support; connect with them on social media, especially LinkedIn
- Obtain a reference for future jobs – from as many mentors and other sources as possible

Finally, it is simply not enough to sit back and bask in the satisfaction of a great internship experience. **In our ultra-competitive job market, you simply must leverage the benefits gained** – and be able to demonstrate your new-found skills to that employer…or a potential employer in the future.

So what can you do to ensure you don't lose momentum? Bank your gains by recording them along the way! Keep an activity and reflective learning journal so you can:

- Note when you learned a new skill, exceeded expectations or met a new influencer or a potential mentor
- Revisit your resume/CV; add examples – quantified, if possible – of when you demonstrated the relevant skills and attitudes mentioned in chapter 4
- Explain how you met challenges and difficulties, what worked in overcoming them and how you might do things differently next time

Go into every internship knowing that to get ahead in your career, you must be able to show the impact you had on each company you worked for!

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7 An internship with a small team

Internships at start-ups, small businesses and grass-roots non-profits offer unique advantages over their corporate and large-scale counterparts. Interns often have more responsibility, are exposed to a wider range of business functions, and many receive more one-on-one mentoring than often takes place at large corporations. Perhaps most important, many small team interns work directly with, and learn from, company founders, owners and directors.

Start-up internships present unique challenges as well: longer hours, perhaps; the expectation of being a problem solver and leader almost immediately; and working directly with, and learning from, company founders, owners and directors.

Intimidated? Not you!

You choose to intern in a small team environment because of your confidence and adventurous, entrepreneurial spirit, right? Executives are just people, like everyone else, right?

In some ways you are correct; executives *are* just people. More than that, they're people who want to see interns succeed. In fact, they *need* their interns to succeed – and to contribute to the company's success. There is simply no room for dead weight in a start-up trying to make it big, a small business trying to

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In other ways, however, you'll need to adapt – *fast* – to thrive (or sometimes even to survive) as a small team intern. Here are some simple suggestions on interning effectively at a small team:

Remember, executives are busy

The average small team executive is typically under pressure that would crack a diamond. While working hard to keep the organization afloat, they juggle many responsibilities – funding, technology, sales, customer service, PR…the list goes on.

Your communication with executives should keep this environment in mind. For instance, save elaborate preamble and set-ups with long introductions for academic papers; while professors love that communication style, start-up executives need quick delivery of important points. Concisely provide the pertinent information, and you're done. (But have supporting data at hand if asked for more detail).

Represent yourself professionally – always

Even when executives wear shorts to the office, buy drinks at company celebrations or work the BBQ at lunch…they're still executives. Fit in, of course, but don't get too casual. Your mentors are *not* your buddies – at least not yet.

In the start-up environment, specifically *you are being evaluated all the time*, in every situation. Start-ups can't afford hiring mistakes. They must move fast, so they often hire exceptional interns directly to permanent positions. Every move you make should represent you as a capable, dedicated professional – and a potential team member.

Create your own feedback loop

In school, you receive feedback and evaluation through tests and grades. It's great because your progress is calculated for you; results are provided on a regular basis. Executives and directors, however, are often too busy to review your projects every day, or even every week.

You'll need to ramp up quickly, and work independently. That's not to say that you shouldn't expect feedback on your work. Rather, it means you may have to help create the opportunity to receive input from your mentor.

Suggest a schedule of feedback meetings; perhaps half-hour, bi-weekly discussions to chart your progress and review your assignments. Before each meeting, email an agenda to your mentor with the main discussion points. Bring your view of progress made on your assignments, and be prepared to discuss any roadblocks or issues encountered. If you've completed your assignments, ask for new ones – and have suggestions ready.

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Take initiative

There may be times when your assignments are done, or stalled. As an intern you can't always just make up your own – and are left with free time. This is the *perfect time* to log into your Facebook account and check status updates, or discuss your latest exploits with friends on Twitter, right?

Wrong! As an intern, you have two main responsibilities:

1. Learn as much as you can from your assignments (and by watching what it takes to run a company)
2. Working with the team to the best of your ability

When you find yourself with free time, *be productive*. Outline a new project or value-add; learn something new from a co-worker; document your work in your journal. Or perhaps research and evaluate your industry and your company's competition.

Unless social media is a defined role within your internship
…save it for your off time.

Interning directly with executives at a small team represents a fantastic opportunity for your early career. No doubt, the challenges you face will be daunting – and you may feel some of that executive pressure too. However, the rewards – and the education – will be that much greater, too.

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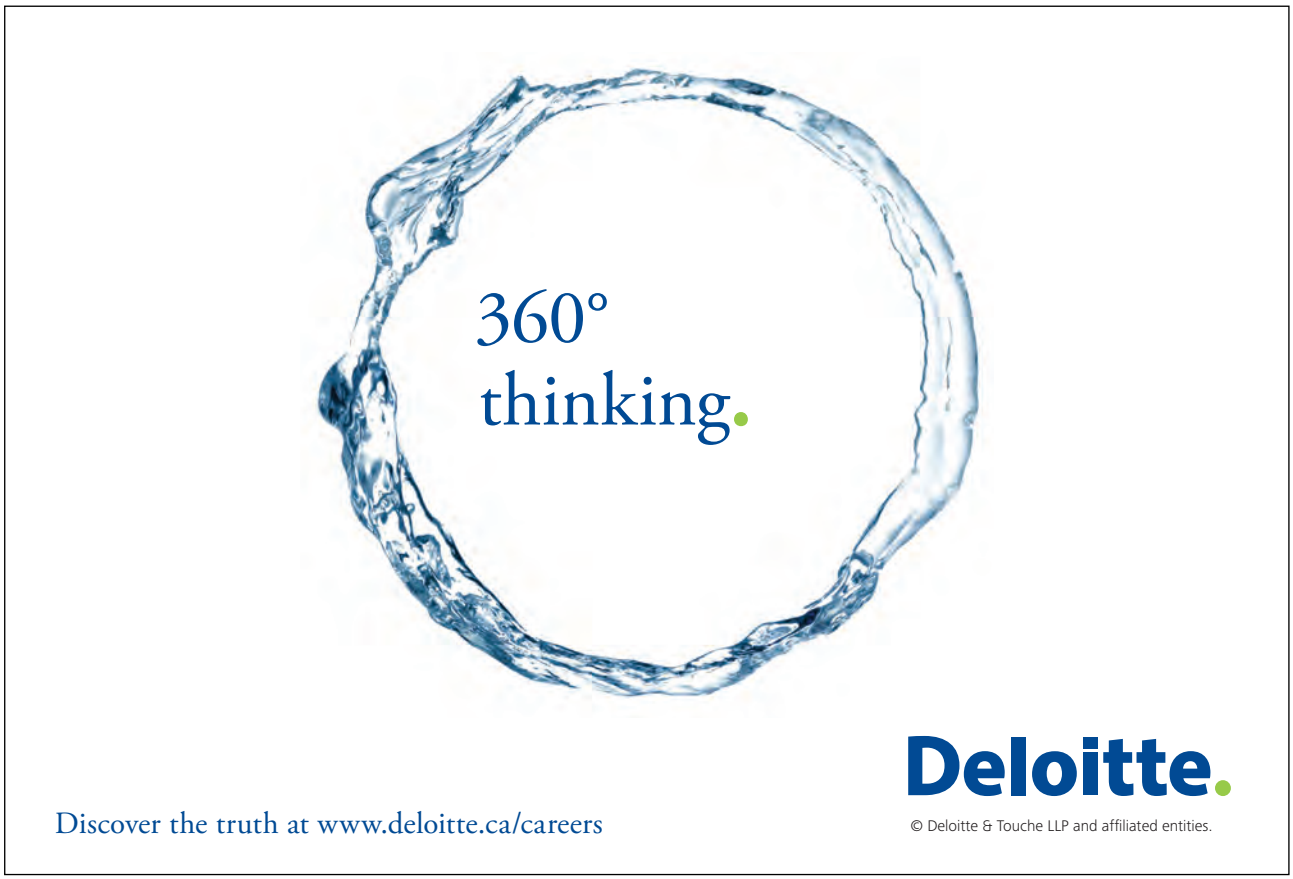
8 The role of mentoring

The most successful and transformational internships involve a genuine mentor-mentee relationship.

A mentor takes pride in introducing you to the workplace … mentors matter.

We all find ourselves needing the wise guidance of someone else to help us make important transitions at various life stages. Having a mentor, or several mentors, will make a huge difference throughout your professional life…but perhaps never more so than during your role as an intern.

Sometimes we learn best from someone who has been there, done that…and got the t-shirt.



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A tennis player, for example, may need someone else beyond the narrow area of improving technique or physical conditioning – someone with a wider, longer-term perspective – for advice on attitude, match strategy, the game plan or long-term career. The mentor is likely to be an experienced tennis player in the past, someone with credibility in the eyes of the mentee.

When you don't know what you don't know, a mentor gives you the benefit of their experiences; they open your eyes to new possibilities or ways forward. They can say what has worked or not worked for them because they have been in that situation, job or role.

Of course, you still decide what choices to make, which direction to go. The mentor just helps you see all possibilities and pitfalls.

As a mentee, how do you ensure you get the best out of that relationship? What can help you to be a brilliant mentee?

8.1 What being a good mentee means

A mentor is usually not paid for their efforts. They work with you based on the potential they see in you.

Here are some tips on how to be the best possible mentee – and earn the continued support of your mentors:

1. Maintain a positive view of yourself
2. Have faith and trust in the mentor
3. Be willing to discuss issues openly
4. Share with your mentor how you feel the relationship is working
5. Accept challenge willingly
6. Recognize the constructive intent of feedback
7. Be active in your own development, not dependent on the mentor
8. Take a few risks in order to make progress
9. Think about other ways to develop outside of mentoring
10. Be willing to openly discuss the end of the relationship when the time comes

8.2 How a good mentoring process can help you

Having a mentor, or a stable of mentors – otherwise known as a "personal board of directors" – provides many benefits, including:

1. Objective information, clarity and reassurance
2. An overview of your role and perhaps your performance
3. Development of marketable skills

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4. Recognition of achievement and learning
5. Support of your choice of options and decision-making
6. A sense of being supported
7. A reality check (sometimes referred to as "tough love")
8. A role model
9. Growth, personally and professionally

"The need for business mentoring is particularly needed in the current economic situation, especially among recent graduates looking for entry-level positions.

There is a clear need for career progression and development, i.e. moving beyond securing a job placement role. An emphasis on graduate development programs by employers is not enough to nurture new talents especially when ***too much focus is placed on educational qualifications and less on equipping graduates with the required skill sets to excel in a given work environment or industry.***

Although it might be argued that one leads to another, business productivity will definitely benefit from mentoring."

Augustus Chinedu Emenogu, Young Leaders and International Student Mentor

8.3 Real life benefits of mentorship

Taken from a workshop run by the authors, here are some real-life benefits a mentor can bring you, as well as the impact the positive behaviors had on the lives and careers of the mentees:

MENTOR Behavior	MENTEE Impact
Acted as a mirror; reflected different view of same image	Effected change in my growth as a person; considered long-term impact
Challenged me; gave me honest feedback	Enabled me to accept criticism
Gentle guidance; helped me refocus	Stopped repeating unhelpful behaviors
Shoulder to lean on	Greatly increased personal confidence
Opened my mind to what I could do for myself	Ownership and motivation; I wouldn't be where I am today
Invested time in me; always available	Felt far more valued
Genuinely there for me; no conflicts of interest; treated me like an equal	Became more open-minded to future mentoring
Set example; imparted perspective	Made different decisions; identified and seized opportunities

Being mentored well is one of life's great experiences – and is an absolutely critical factor to those achieving success in the new economy.

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9 Using internships as a career compass

From a young age, we get asked:

- "What do you want to be when you grow up?"
- "Which college will you go to?"
- "What career do you want to pursue?"

Perhaps as a result, we put immense pressure on young people to choose a major/degree and a career, at a very early age. Yet, many of us end up with remarkably different careers than what we studied for; our passions often change.

Internships early in your college career are a fantastic means to immerse yourself in a career; to "test drive" your choice before you pursue it for real. The short-term nature of the typical internship is ideal for this try-out:

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- If a profession isn't what you want…you're not only done with the internship in a few short months, you still have time to refocus your education and personal brand
- On the other hand, if the career direction is a good fit, you have time to take on several more internships – and meet many more influencers – in that industry before graduation

Some estimate we'll have five to seven completely different careers in our lifetime.

One particular story brings this point home well:

A college junior, who – prompted by her love of animals – had known since she was the age of 12 she wanted to be a veterinary technician, got an internship at a large animal hospital.

In those few work shifts, she quickly discovered that a veterinary technician doesn't actually help animals…they clean up after them. And, they often end up helping dispose of the animals that don't survive. Her heart was broken…in just a few days, her decade-long career dream was dashed.

This story does have a happy ending…That intern ended up working at an animal shelter that saved pets from euthanasia. She changed her major/degree during the last year of school to focus more on non-profit and for-purpose business – and channeled her love of animals into a highly rewarding career (for her, and the pets!).

While not quite as dramatic, this type of story is repeated over and over again as young professionals enter the workforce. The engineer who just wanted job security finds out his passion is somewhere far from the world of semiconductors; the accounting major – who only went into accounting because that is what her parents wanted for her – changes focus after just one winter internship at a Big 4 firm.

Use internships as validation for your choices. Through completion of multiple internships, you will better decide what culture is best for you, what kind of a boss you appreciate most, and if virtual work suits you best. Or instead whether you would rather be in the office each day. Many young careerists even use internships to decide what part of the world they'd like to live in after graduation.

Never in your life will you have more flexibility. Never again will you have more freedom. The right internship can make many decisions more clear – and your future more focused.

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10 Get the post-graduation job you want

Think of your internship as an extended job interview and probation period rolled into one. That means doing your preparation just as you would with any interview – and showing what you're worth from the moment you are given the chance. Here are some tips to leverage your internship into a full-time job:

Tell them what you want

If you are serious about turning your internship into a full-time position, present this from the very beginning – perhaps during your first interview. If your employer is keen on the idea, then you've got yourself an amazing internship and job opportunity. If not, and a full-time gig is your ultimate goal, this internship may not be right for you.

Interview them

Remember that you're testing the water with this company just as much as they are testing you. Take advantage of the internship to see if you can spot bad company culture before you get excited about working full-time. On the other hand, if you find that you love the working environment, you'll have all the more motivation to do your absolute best.

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Write everything down

Take the initiative and, as previously described, track and update all of the milestones and tasks you complete as they are assigned and enter them in your journal or smartphone. At the end of the internship, this will come in handy when you make your case to become a full-time hire. This tangible record will serve as both proof of the value you've added to the company and motivation for yourself to continue adding valuable accomplishments to the list throughout your internship. And…all this hard data and the success stories will help your resume/CV look amazing!

Be a sponge; remain positive

Your boss and co-workers realize you're an intern, and you're not expected to know how to do everything that's assigned to you. Take advantage of this short period in your life when it's okay to ask questions about the basics. Absorb all of your surroundings. If you make a mistake, don't let it get you down. Stay positive, and remember that employers may judge you by how you react to the mistake…rather than the mistake itself.

Act like a full-time employee

Even though you may be the newest member of the team, be confident in your abilities; cordially talk to everyone at the company like you're here to stay. If you like the company culture, show it by immersing yourself in the company outings and socials. Small-talking with your co-workers while waiting in line for your morning coffee will slowly build relationships, and it'll be nice to see their congratulatory smile when you hopefully tell them the good news of your full-time hire.

Schedule a face-to-face

As you near the end of the internship period, schedule a meeting with your employer to talk about your performance and possibilities of continuing your employment at the company. Bring your list of accomplishments, and show them exactly how you've proven yourself valuable.

Keep your connections

If you haven't already, no matter what the outcome of your internship, make sure you keep in touch with all of the connections you've made at this internship. Add everyone you've worked with and met on LinkedIn, and make sure to send them a quick hello from time-to-time to keep the contact fresh.

Don't rush any decisions

If you receive a full-time offer, remember you are not obligated to take the offer…or at least the first offer. If the company is not a good fit, be appreciative of the offer, but realize you can take your newfound experience to a culture that better fits you…or perhaps hold out for the next offer.

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Be sure to research your market value by comparing salaries at various companies to similar job titles with your level of experience. Be honest and sincere about this – because if you counter-offer with a number above what you know you're worth, you could lose the offer altogether.

Keep these tips in mind – and your next career transition just may be from intern to full-time employee!

See the light!
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11 Are you ready to get started?

We know that 9 out of 10 direct-from-higher education hires in the US, and just slightly less in the UK, go to those with internship experience on their resumes/CVs. We also know that to even be *considered* for an internship (let alone a job) at many high-profile companies (Google and AOL, for example) an applicant must already have 3 or 4 internships under their belt.

We know employers look for entry-level talent with real-world experience
…yet only 40% of candidates bother to get even one internship?

If you want a real job, at a real company, within your chosen career field…complete at least one high-impact internship for every year you're in higher education. Start early – or *now* – and capitalize on the opportunities your campus offers.

To get ahead, we must lose the "internships are not mandatory" mindset.

We must *compete*.

Today, the career preparation process is as much a part of being a higher education student as going to lectures and writing academic papers. These are competitive times, and today's college student needs to be much savvier about preparing for that transition from academics to career.

Are you ready to have a job secured before graduation?

Are you ready to get started?